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Quebec / News / Local News

Coronavirus updates, Dec. 8: First vaccines to be given at delivery sites, not long-term care homes – Tam

That doesn't seem to jibe with what Quebec said yesterday. The province plans to start inoculations at CHSLDs next week.

Andy Riga
Dec 08, 2020 • December 8, 2020 • 13 minute read • Join the conversation

Paramedics transfer a person from Maimonides Geriatric Centre in Montreal, Sunday, Nov. 29, 2020. PHOTO BY GRAHAM HUGHES /The Canadian Press

Updated throughout the day on Tuesday, Dec. 8. Questions/comments: ariga@postmedia.com

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Top updates

- First vaccines to be given right at delivery sites, not long-term care homes: Tam
- Half of restaurants at risk of closing in six months, association says
- Trump could try to limit Canada's access to COVID vaccine
- No plans for stricter lockdown in Quebec, Legault says
- Quebec reports 1,564 cases, 36 deaths as hospitalizations rise
- Maimonides will be among first CHSLDs to get vaccine
- French schools are not allowed to install air purifiers, Liberal MNA says
- Sign up for our free nightly coronavirus newsletter

5 p.m.

Join us again tomorrow

Thanks for reading.

I'll be back with yet another live blog on Wednesday morning.

In the meantime, you can follow all our coverage via the coronavirus page.

My previous coronavirus live blogs are available here.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

4:35 p.m.

Canada confident in vaccine deliveries even if U.S. blocks exports

Canada is confident there will be no disruption of COVID-19 vaccine supplies even if the United States blocks their export, because vaccines are manufactured in several countries, a minister said on Tuesday.

Read our full story.

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4 p.m.

Legault holds press conference

Premier François Legault is holding a press conference at 4 p.m. to react to an ethics report concerning Economy Minister Pierre Fitzgibbon.

It's unclear if he will take questions about the pandemic.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

3:55 p.m.

Quebec replaces vaccination chief

Two weeks after being appointed to head Quebec's vaccination campaign, Jérôme Gagnon is stepping down for health reasons, Health Minister Christian Dubé said in a press release this afternoon.

Gagnon, who previously worked for Quebec's public-security department, is being replaced by Daniel Paré, currently head of the Chaudière-Appalaches regional health and social-services unit

"This will in no way slow down the deployment of the unprecedented vaccination campaign which will begin as soon as the vaccine is available in Quebec," the provincial government said.

3:50 p.m.

Tam added more followers in 2020 than Bieber, Drake and Mendes, Twitter says

Dr. Theresa Tam
@CPHO_Canada

1/2 @justinbieber, @Drake and @ShawnMendes if you start sharing public health messages you could increase your followers too. I'm a doctor, not a popstar !

Thanks to all who have followed this account for the latest on public health and #COVID19.

Twitter Canada @TwitterCanada
Replying to @TwitterCanada
Key accounts keeping us safe saw big growth in 2020. #ThisHappened

Chief Medical Health Officer Theresa Tam (@CPHO_Canada) ends the year with close to 250K followers on Twitter.

She gained more new followers in 2020 than @justinbieber, @Drake or @ShawnMendes!

2:55 PM · Dec 8, 2020

2:55 PM · Dec 8, 2020

1.3K See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

2:30 p.m.

Opposition parties denounce Quebec's double standard on school ventilation

Opposition parties criticized the Legault government today for telling francophone school boards they are not allowed to buy air purifiers for classrooms while the English boards and private schools have already proceeded with the purchases.

Read our full story, by Philip Authier in Quebec City.

2:25 p.m.

First vaccines to be given right at delivery sites, not long-term care homes: Tam

Yesterday, Health Minister Christian Dubé said the first Pfizer vaccines expected next week will be administered in long-term care homes (CHSLDs).

But that may not be possible, according to this update from The Canadian Press today:

Canada's chief public health officer says the first doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine are likely to be given only to people who can physically be at one of the 14 delivery sites identified by provincial governments for the first arrivals of the vaccine.

for the first arrivals of the vaccine.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Dr. Theresa Tam said at a briefing that it is a “rapidly evolving situation” but acknowledged that this will make it difficult to get long-term care residents vaccinated first.

“It’s true you cannot move residents very easily from a long-term care centre to a vaccine site,” she said. “That’s just the reality.”

It is not clear how this jibes with some provincial plans, including in Quebec, where the health minister said Monday the government intends to ship its first vaccine doses to two long-term care homes.

A Pfizer spokeswoman told The Canadian Press that the company is asking for the delivery limitation.

“For the initial stages of vaccination, I can confirm that we are asking for vaccines to be administered only at the first vaccination points,” said Christina Antoniou.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

She said where the vaccine can be injected is “part of ongoing discussions” with provincial governments, who are in charge of getting the vaccine into patients. However she noted Pfizer’s actual contract for the COVID-19 vaccine is with the federal government.

“Pfizer, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the provinces are working together to finalize preparations at the first point of use sites this week, including training on how to handle the product,” she said. “These are the sites identified by the federal government’s National Operations Centre for initial vaccination of priority populations.”

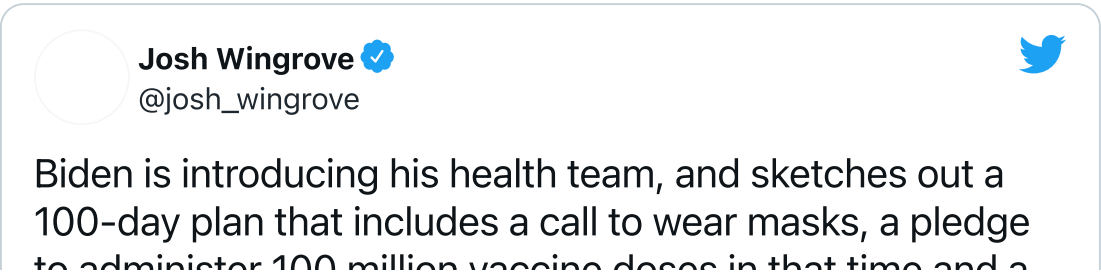
Tam said she is hopeful that as everyone involved gets more experienced and comfortable transporting and administering the vaccine, things could change.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

“I do think that’s a fluid situation,” she said.

2:20 p.m.

Biden pledges to administer 100 million vaccine doses in first 100 days



to administer 100 million vaccine doses in that time and a push to reopen schools.

He's warning that beating the virus will take time, though.

1:10 PM · Dec 8, 2020

134 See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

2:15 p.m.

Ontario to provide proof of COVID vaccination; those without it

Ontario to provide proof of COVID vaccination, those without it may face restrictions

Ontario's health minister says residents who choose not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine could face restrictions, The Canadian Press is reporting.

Christine Elliott today said the province will not make the shot mandatory, but some activities like travel or access to communal spaces such as movie theatres could eventually be restricted for those who opt not to get immunized.

Elliott said the province will issue government documentation so that people can prove they have received the vaccine.

The documentation will be "essential" to have as the province emerges from the pandemic, she said.

Ontario has said it could start receiving doses of the vaccine in the coming weeks and plans to offer it first to vulnerable seniors and health care workers.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

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2 p.m.

Laval schools to be supplied with saliva tests

In an effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus and make things easier for families, students in some Laval schools now have access to COVID-19 saliva tests that can be administered on-site or at home.

Read our full story.

1:45

1:45 p.m.

Montérégie ambulance technicians say pandemic has left them exhausted

A union says ambulance technicians south of Montreal are exhausted as area hospitals overflow and the number of new COVID-19 cases in the region reaches new heights.

Read our full story.

1:40 p.m.

A day in the life of Dr. Anthony Fauci

HuffPost reporter Jeffrey Young asked Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, what his schedule looked like one day last month.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

When I got on the phone with Fauci, I asked him what schedule looked like that day. Here's his full answer. https://t.co/iuyMlwydNh pic.twitter.com/ihAAYXzjzv — Jeffrey Young (@JeffYoung) December 3, 2020

1:15 p.m.

Half of restaurants at risk of closing in six months, association says

Pandemic restrictions are taking a devastating toll on restaurants.

Restaurants Canada, an association that represents businesses in the food service industry, today published results of a survey of companies representing 3,000 restaurants across the country.

The survey found that 48 per cent of single-unit operators expect to permanently close within six months if conditions don't improve, Restaurants Canada said.

Fifty-six per cent of operators with multiple outlets said they expect to close at least one location within the same time period, the association said.

Other highlights:

- 80 per cent of restaurants are "either losing money or barely scraping by."
- 63 per cent of food service businesses that are losing money expect to take at least a year to return to profitability.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Citing a recent Statistics Canada report, the association said the sector lost 72,000 jobs in October and November, after recovering 426,900 jobs from May to September.

This leaves the industry more than 260,000 jobs short of where it was in February.

"Our members are seeking a new year's resolution from government, not only to support their survival but our industry's vital role building back a stronger, more resilient Canada," said Todd Barclay, president of Restaurants Canada.

The association is urging governments to consult with the industry in a timely manner "to ensure businesses impacted by significant restrictions are provided sufficient, efficient and effective aid throughout the ongoing economic and public health crisis."

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

It also wants governments to "reassure Canadians that restaurants provide safe and reliable meal options" and to "promote takeout and delivery to show support for struggling entrepreneurs, restaurant staff and local food suppliers."

In Quebec, restaurants in red zones – including Greater Montreal – are only allowed to offer takeout and delivery. That restriction will be in place until at least Jan. 11, Premier François Legault has said.

12:50 p.m.

Video: What are François Legault's holiday plans?

With no gatherings allowed, what are Premier Legault's plans for the holidays?

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

12:30 p.m.

Trump could try to limit Canada's access to COVID vaccine

From The Canadian Press:

Canada is waiting to see whether President Donald Trump tries to limit its access to COVID-19 vaccines in the name of "America First."

Trump is expected to sign an executive order today to ensure U.S. citizens are first in line for vaccine doses manufactured in the United States, but it's unclear how much impact it will have.

Trump is under political pressure following reports the White House passed up a chance to secure 500 million extra doses of Pfizer's vaccine, the first to be used outside a clinical trial.

"We're very confident that Pfizer and other vaccine manufacturers that are contractually obligated to deliver vaccines to Canada will be able to meet those obligations," said Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc in an Ottawa news conference.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

"We have already assumed that we shouldn't be tied to one particular manufacturing site, so the contracts contemplate that. Pfizer, for example, has many manufacturing facilities in Europe as well as the United States."

It wouldn't be the first time Trump has tried to deny medical resources to Canada as part of his protectionist "America First" doctrine.

In April, he tried to prevent U.S.-based 3M from honouring contacts with Canadian buyers of American-made N95 masks, vital in limiting the spread of the virus.

And last month, the federal Liberal government effectively blocked a U.S. effort to allow wholesalers to buy cheaper prescription drugs from north of the border.

12:25 p.m.

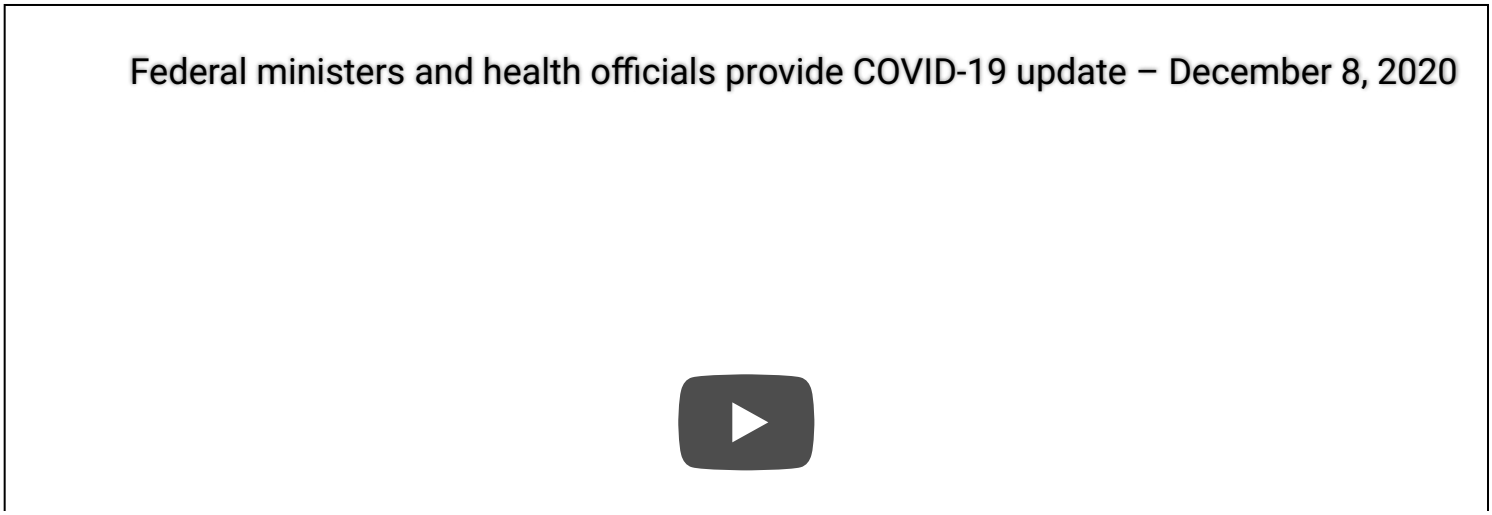
Video: Quebec not planning to make vaccine mandatory – Legault

Quebec not planning to make COVID-19 vaccine mandatory: Legault

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Noon

Federal health officials, ministers provide update



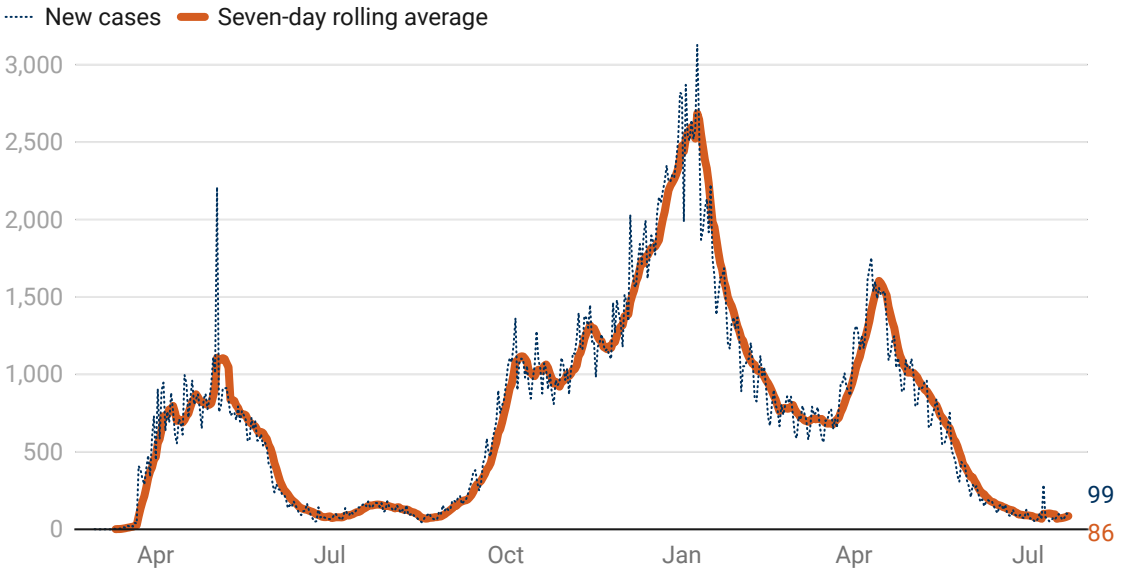
STORY CONTINUES BELOW

11:35 a.m.

Updated charts: Quebec cases, deaths

COVID-19 in Quebec

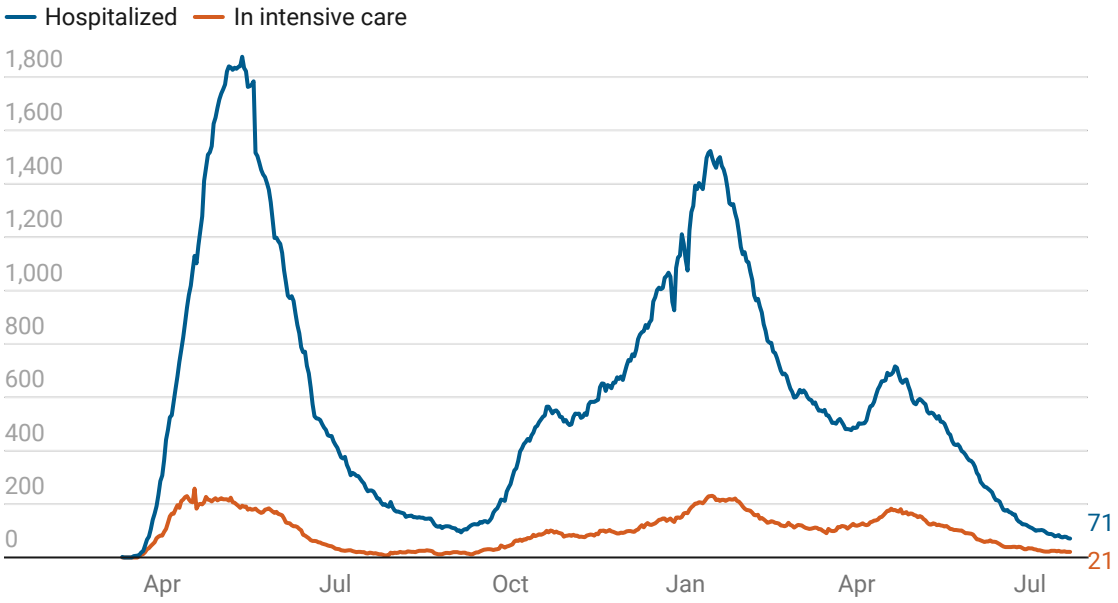
376,429 cases have been reported since the pandemic began.



The spike on May 3, 2020, is the result of 1,317 cases from the month of April being reclassified.

Chart: Montreal Gazette • Source: Quebec Health Dept. • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

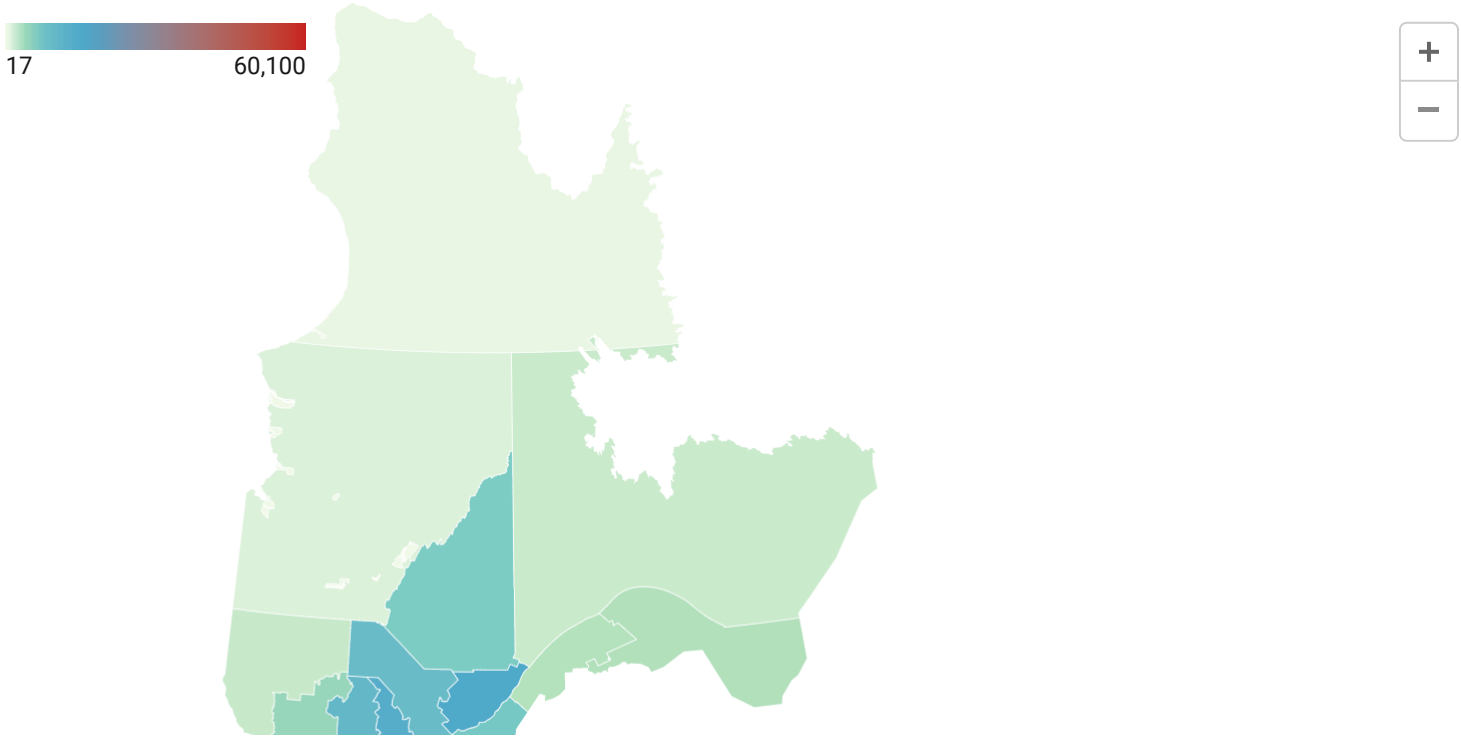
COVID-19 hospitalizations in Quebec



Date denotes when numbers were reported as part of the provincial government's official tally

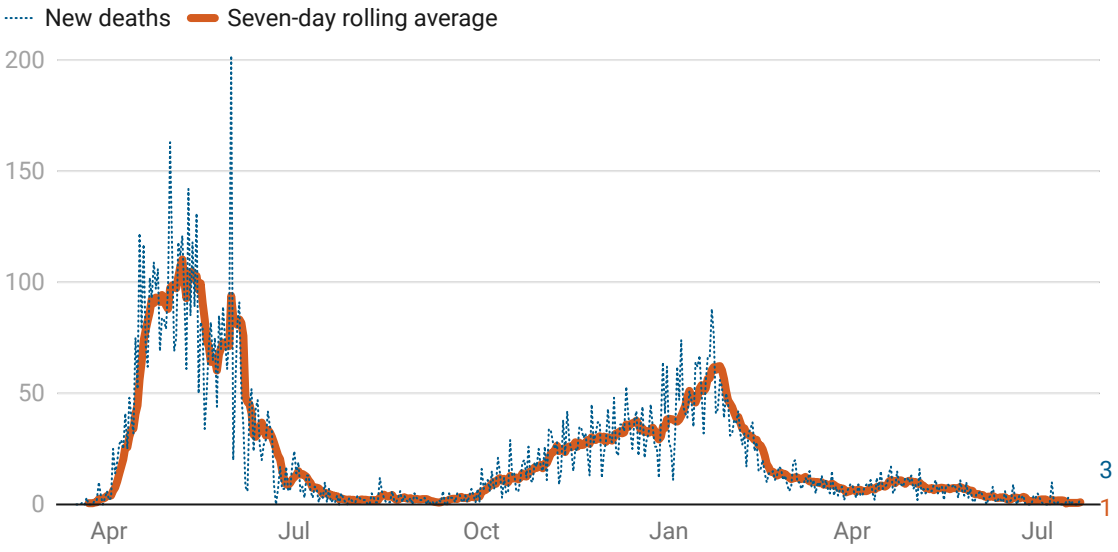
Chart: Montreal Gazette • Source: Institut national de santé publique du Québec • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

COVID-19 cases by region



COVID-19 deaths in Quebec

11,238 deaths have been attributed to the virus since the pandemic began.



Deaths are shown on the day they were reported, which may not be the day they occurred.

Chart: Montreal Gazette • Source: Institut national de santé publique du Québec • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

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11:20 a.m.

No plans for stricter lockdown in Quebec, Legault says

Despite the increase in hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19, the Quebec government is not ready to impose a stricter lockdown, Premier François Legault said today.

Read our full story, by Katherine Wilton.

11:05 a.m.

Quebec reports 1,564 cases, 36 deaths as hospitalizations rise

For the fourth consecutive day, Quebec has recorded more than 1,500 new cases, as hospitalizations continue to mount.

Quebec reported 1,564 new cases of COVID-19 today.

Thirty-six new deaths were registered, including 12 over the past 24 hours.

Twenty-two deaths occurred between Dec. 1 and 6, with two more occurring before Dec. 1.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

A total of 835 people are now in hospital with COVID-19 – an increase of 17.

Among those in the hospital, 114 are in intensive care. That's nine more than on the previous day.

On Sunday, Quebec conducted 25,008 tests. That's the last day for which screening data is available.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Quebec has reported 154,740 cases and 7,313 deaths linked to COVID-19.

Date	Cas confirmés	Décès[2]	Hospitalisations	Hospitalisations aux soins intensifs	Prélèvements réalisés
1er décembre	1 514	20	740 (+21)	99 (+1)	34 136
2 décembre	1 470	29	737 (-3)	99	35 111
3 décembre	1 345	32	761 (+24)	97 (-2)	35 391
4 décembre	2 031	25	754 (-7)	96 (-1)	31 917
5 décembre	1 691	28	778 (+24)	102 (+6)	27 000
6 décembre	1 577	16	818 (+40)	105 (+3)	25 008
7 décembre	1 564	12	835 (+17)	114 (+9)	ND

Régions sociosanitaires	6 décembre 2020	7 décembre 2020	Total des cas confirmés depuis le début de la pandémie
01 - Bas-Saint-Laurent	19	6	1 019
02 - Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean	84	74	5 909
03 - Capitale-Nationale	160	146	13 132
04 - Mauricie-et-Centre-du-Québec	50	59	7 581
05 - Estrie	102	78	5 492
06 - Montréal	472	492	54 782
07 - Outaouais	28	18	3 769
08 - Abitibi-Témiscamingue	1	4	293
09 - Côte-Nord	0	0	213
10 - Nord-du-Québec	1	0	55
11 - Gaspésie – Îles-de-la-Madeleine	11	13	1 433
12 - Chaudière-Appalaches	48	59	6 005
13 - Laval	148	171	12 503
14 - Lanaudière	160	102	12 222
15 - Laurentides	74	64	8 425
16 - Montérégie	220	277	21 733
17 - Nunavik	-1	0	28
18 - Terres-Cries-de-la-Baie-James	0	0	16
Hors Québec	0	1	127
Région à déterminer	0	0	3

Total	1 577	1 564	154 740

10:55 a.m.

Real-estate plans of young Quebecers on hold because of pandemic: poll

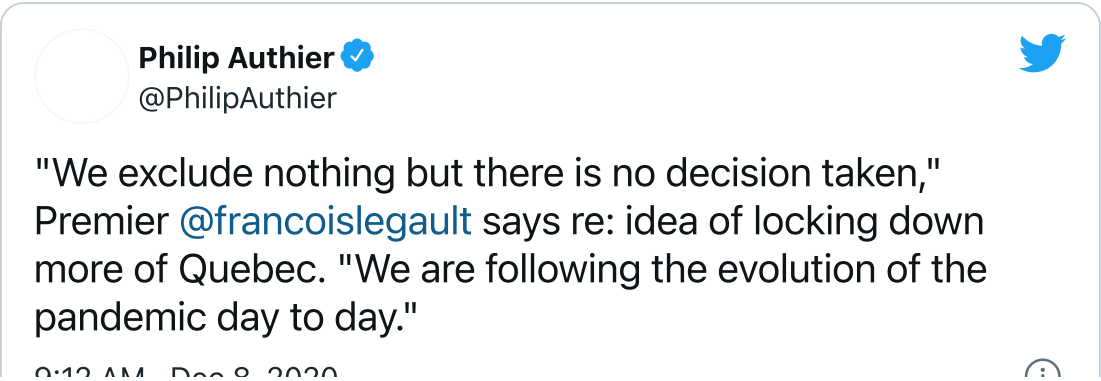
Just as they bore the brunt of the economic fallout of the pandemic, young Quebecers are finding themselves affected far more than their elders when it comes to buying or selling a home during the COVID-19 outbreak, a survey made public today suggests.

Read our full story.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

10:40 a.m.

‘No decision’ yet on locking down Quebec: Legault



9:12 AM · Dec 8, 2020

1 See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

10:10 a.m.

Maimonides will be among first CHSLDs to get vaccine next week

The Maimonides Geriatric Centre in Côte-St-Luc will be among the first CHSLDs to get the Pfizer vaccine in Quebec, with inoculations set to begin next week.

The long-term care home has been hard hit by the second wave. Last week, 20 of 30 residents with active cases of COVID-19 were moved to other institutions.

Quebec expects to get 4,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine next week, meaning about 2,000 people could get immunized.

The Maimonides news was announced in a letter to residents and their families today from Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg, president of the CIUSSS West-Central Montreal.

“I am pleased to inform you that Maimonides has been selected for early access to the newly approved Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine,” Rosenberg said in the letter. “We are very fortunate to have been chosen since vaccines are the most effective way to save lives and protect our most vulnerable loved ones. This vaccine will be instrumental in eliminating COVID-19 from our own long-term care centre and, ultimately, from society as a whole.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

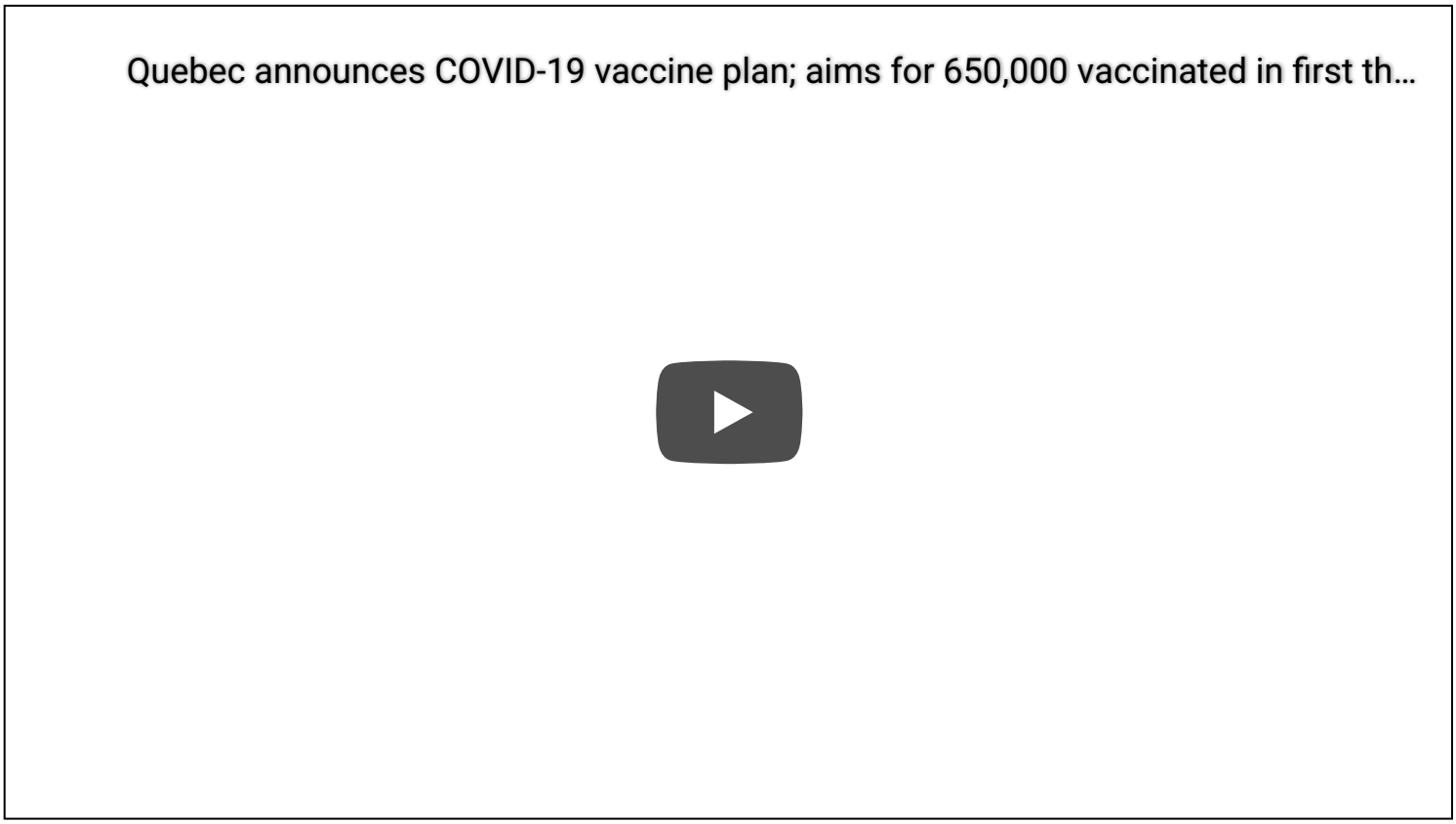
“A substantial team of experts from the government, our CIUSSS and Maimonides is already working on the strategy, logistics and readiness for this significant program. A simulation exercise will take place this week, and vaccination will begin during the week of December 14. In the coming days, we will be sharing background information with you, as well as hosting a town hall meeting on Thursday to respond to your questions and concerns. A member of our inter–disciplinary team will also be calling family representatives to discuss the program and request consent for the vaccination.

“The COVID-19 vaccine is administered in two doses, with the second coming 21 days after the first. Research has shown that the protective effects of the vaccine begin one to two weeks after the second dose has been administered. We would like to emphasize that even after vaccination begins, all of the current precautionary measures—wearing personal protection equipment, physical distancing, testing, hand hygiene and limited access to our facility—will remain in effect.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

“Many of you are probably wondering whether this COVID-19 vaccine is safe. The answer is an unqualified “Yes”. It was created by Pfizer and BioNTech and has been approved in many countries, and is expected to be approved by Health Canada in the coming days.

"Vaccination will start across Canada next week, in advance of a nation-wide roll-out in January. This comes on the heels of many months of a rigorous and detailed scientific review of all of the available data. The effectiveness of the vaccine has been determined to exceed 95 per cent."



STORY CONTINUES BELOW

9:45 a.m.

French schools are not allowed to install air purifiers, Liberal MNA says

On Twitter this morning, Liberal education critic Marwah Rizqy posted a letter to parents from a French-language school service centre regarding air purifiers. It says schools are not allowed to install them. The name of the board was removed from the letter.

On the English side, the English Montreal School Board and the Lester B. Pearson School Board have bypassed the provincial government and ordered air purifiers for classrooms.

“Due to the current ongoing COVID-19 health crisis and the arrival of the cold weather season, there is no question that naturally ventilated classrooms and specific areas should be equipped with these air purifiers,” EMSB chair Joe Ortona said last week.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Experts and opposition parties have been hammering the Coalition Avenir Québec government to do something about classroom ventilation in the wake of new evidence about the spread of the COVID-19 virus particles in the air and in aerosols.

A charity recently announced that it is raising money to purchase air purifiers for Quebec classrooms, citing concern that poor ventilation could increase the spread of the coronavirus.

French schools are overseen by school service centres, which recently replaced school boards. They are governed by parents, school system personnel and members of the community.

On the English side, school boards are still governed by elected commissioners, pending a court challenge.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Critics have complained that school board reform centralizes power in the hands of the education minister.

Education Minister Jean-François Roberge has insisted that school ventilation systems are “healthy and safe.”

Marwah Rizqy
@marwahrizqy

Ventilation dans les écoles: on est rendu là ! Le ministre de l’#Éducation interdit l’installation de purificateurs d’air portatifs dans les écoles publiques francophones!
Seules les écoles anglophones et privées ont le droit d’en installer. Vraiment M. Le ministre?

7:55 AM · Dec 8, 2020

158 50 Copy link to Tweet

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

COVID-19: Why isn't Quebec providing schools with air purifiers?

9:10 a.m.

Opinion: Unlock our cellar doors, Mr. Legault, and give restaurateurs a lifeline

"My colleagues and I are owed the privilege, autonomy and responsibility of selling wine inventories without food or breaking the law in these extraordinary circumstances. This is not a big ask; we have shown throughout our careers that we do what is best for our clients and our restaurant families."

Read the full opinion piece, by David Hayfield McMillan, co-owner of Joe Beef, Liverpool House, Vin Papillon and McKiernan.

David McMillan is co-owner and chef at Joe Beef in Montreal. PHOTO BY ALLEN MCINNIS /Montreal Gazette file photo

9 a.m.

Public health director Arruda to testify before National Assembly

Public health director Arruda to testify before National Assembly tomorrow

Quebec public health director Horacio Arruda will testify before the National Assembly on Wednesday.

Read our full story.

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9 a.m.

‘Go for it,’ says grandmother who got world’s first Pfizer vaccine in Britain

Margaret Keenan, the 90-year-old grandmother who became the first person in the world to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine outside of a trial in Britain on Tuesday, has a message for others: “go for it” to beat the devastating disease.

An early riser, Keenan, from Northern Ireland, received the Pfizer-BioNTech shot at her local hospital in Coventry, central England, at 0631 GMT, a week before she turns 91.

Read our full story.

ABC News
@ABC

TAMING OF THE FLU: As the U.K. began administering COVID-19 vaccines to the first patients outside of trials, the second man to get one was named William Shakespeare. abcn.ws/2LjZuhN

7:22 AM · Dec 8, 2020

840 See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

8:55 a.m.

Here's where Montrealers can get tested today

Montrealers can be screened at test centres across the island.

You can check screening clinic wait times here.

8:45 a.m.

Quebec has added almost 20,000 cases over two weeks

This was the situation across Canada as of last night, according to the Canada COVID-19 Situational Awareness Dashboard.

8:30 a.m.

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Stay informed with our daily email newsletter focused on local coronavirus coverage and other essential news, delivered directly to your email inbox by 7 p.m. on weekdays.

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ariga@postmedia.com

Read my previous live blogs here.

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TRENDING

1 **Shea Weber's career with Canadiens is likely over because of injuries**

2 **Stu Cowan: Weber's loss leaves Man Mountain-size gap in Habs' landscape**

3 **COVID-19 updates, July 22: 95% of new Quebec cases are among people not fully vaccinated**

4 **Quebec may need more than 75 per cent to get vaccinated, experts warn**

5 **Analysis: Geneticists studying new COVID variant in Quebec**

THIS WEEK IN FLYERS

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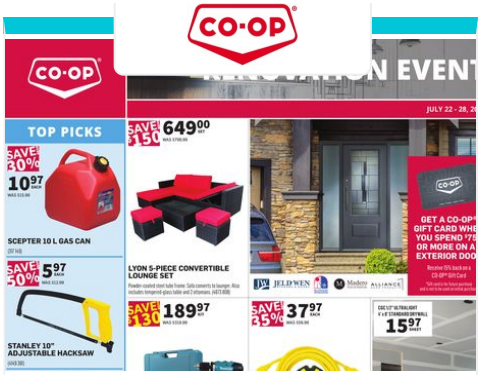

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